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FROM: Kika de la Garza

Washington D C

15TH DISTRICT AIRPORTS located in McAllen, Brownsville, and Harlingen have been apportioned a total of \$1,399,786 for fiscal year 1978. This announcement comes from the Federal Aviation Administration, the federal agency handling the Airport Development Aid Program funds.

This money, worth \$355 million nationally, will mostly go to air carrier airports like those in South Texas for use over the next three years. The remaining money will be allocated exclusively to general aviation airports in the states for use over a two-year period.

Once an airport has been apportioned some of these funds, applications must be filed by the airport proposing how the money would be spent. All airport managers in the 15th District know this. When the applications are approved, the money is issued.

The amounts allocated to the 15th District airports are as follows: Brownsville \$354,346; Harlingen, \$684,833; and McAllen, \$360,607. We look forward to the use of these funds to meet the transportation demands of a growing South Texas area.

* * *

EVEN AS MONEY IS APPORTIONED to our airports, concern has focused recently on a FAA proposal to close 73 airport control towers in the U S including the tower facilities in McAllen, Brownsville, and Harlingen. The FAA felt that by closing down what the FAA terms seemingly unprofitable towers, the federal government could save money. Comment on proposals on how to do this is being solicited by the FAA.

Presently, the only way to close a tower is by using the methods that were in use at the time the tower was built. This is called the grandfather clause.

So, the rules for closing down airport control towers are not uniform. The 15th District facilities were built when the criteria for closing the towers were not as stringent as today.

Hearings and public comment have been solicited to obtain views on the above proposal along with four other proposals which are (1) continuing operations of all existing towers (2) close down the eight that don't even meet criteria for operation in effect at the time they were built which wouldn't affect us (3) pick only 35 to 40 to close down which would affect Brownsville's airport tower, or (4) give states or local interests with 60 listed involved towers until 1980 an opportunity to take over some of the responsibility of operating these towers which would affect the Harlingen and Brownsville airports.

When the proposal was published suggesting the closing of these towers, I alerted the mayors of the three Valley cities. I have protested the proposed FAA action. If anyone wants to join me in this protest, I would be happy to relay this to the FAA.

Before any decision is made, the FAA must consider our area's location. While the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center will provide some service if the traffic control towers are closed, sentiment in the District should support their continued service. The FAA has promised to examine again any tower recommended for closing after the hearings are held. I'll keep trying.

* * *

ALSO RELATING TO THE FAA AIRPORT TOWER SITUATION in the 15th District is the recent reduction from 24 hours to 16 hours service at the Brownsville Air Control Tower. By doing this the FAA put all three district airport towers on the 16 hour schedule.

* * *

MY BILL HAS PASSED THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE which is designed to help balance the needs of farmers to obtain pesticides against the safeguards needed to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of some of these chemicals.

This bill, HR 8681 is the Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide and Fungicide Act. It has been reported to the House for approval. If the bill becomes law the Environmental Protection Agency, responsible for carrying out the law, will have better guidelines than those in the past. The legislation would expedite EPA's registration and reregistration of pesticides, encourage much needed research for safe and effective pesticides by manufacturers and formulators of pesticides, and direct the Department of Agriculture to give priority to research on biologically integrated alternatives for pest controls.

Another big point of the bill is its strengthening of the authority of the states in administering pesticide programs. It also relieves pesticide applicators from certain restrictions currently imposed upon them.

This bill tries to answer many of the problems farmers and consumers have been experiencing with the way FIFRA legislation has been administered in the past. Many hours of hearings and mark-up sessions have resulted in the bill. The Senate has acted on its version of the proposal. The House must act on its version, and the conflicting views reconciled before the President receives the measure for enactment.

* * *

FOR NINETY-TWO-POINT-TWO PERCENT of the time, I was on the floor of the House when votes were taken on 500 measures. This percent covers the first seven months of this session of the 95th Congress and is the latest poll issued. When I was not present, my congressional duties had me somewhere else. This happened only 14 times out of 500 in an effort to keep my service to the District "from everlasting to everlasting".

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME: Visiting my office from home this week were Mr and Mrs Cyril Vaughan of Brownsville; and Mr Joe Chapa of Linn.

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